(c) To ensure adequate quantity of sugarcane for the new as well as existing units the following measures have been taken:

(i) No licence would normally be granted for the establishment of new sugar factories within a radius of 40 Kms of an existing unit;

(ii) The State Governments are required to clearly demarcate reserved areas for each existing sugar factory as well as proposed new factory; and

(iii) The basic criterion for the establishment of a new sugar factory would be abundant availability of sugarcane in a compact area around the proposed factory site. Potential for further cane development would be an additional factor.

Soil erosion

2051. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country is facing a major problem regarding the erosion of top soil so much so that more than half of the country's land is affected by soil erosion;

(b) if so, what according to the study, if any, made is the annual percentage of soil erosion in the country and what is the percentage of soil which is permanently lost to sea or otherwise;

(c) what percentage of the total irrigated land in the country is lost annually due to water logging and salinity etc; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government so far to develop the technology and to transfer it to the fields to check the process of soil erosion in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) It is estimated that about 175 million ha. comprising 53.2 per cent of the country's geographical area of 329 million ha. is subject to soil erosion and different types of land degradation such as water logging, alkalinity, salinity, gullies and ravines, shifting cultivation, etc.

(b) Detailed assessment has not been carried out to determine the annual percentage of soil erosion in the country. However, estimates indicate that about 6000 million tonnes of soil are lost annually due to soil eroson.

(c) Water logging is caused by conditions such as periodical flooding, over-flow by runoff, over irrigation, seepage, artisan water and lack of sub-surface drainage, etc. In course of time some of these lands turn saline or alkaline thereby reducing production potential of land under cultivation. However, estimates of percentages or irrigated land lost due to water logging and salinity etc. have not been made.

(d) The technology for preventing soil erosion is being developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research through its various Research Centres and Operational Research Projects located in different parts of the country. The appropriate technologies developed through research are being transferred to the field through Centre and State Sector programmes of soil and water conservation which are being implemented since the First Five Year Plan. The technology comprise of both engineering and vegetative measures. They mainly consist of bunding, terracing land levelling and shaping, construction of water harvesting structures, control of gullies, reclamation of revaines, reclamation of saline and alkali soils, improved cropping patterns, afforestation, grass land development, etc. depending upon the kind of problem of different types of land.